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# REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

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Tuesday, December 9. 1707.

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**R**umaging among old Records in the North, which has been my Work for some time, it came to pass, that there came in my Way an old Speech, made a long time ago by a noble Peer, and which was printed for Instruction, or Ostentation, or something else, as was known in those Times; and annex'd to the Speech, was found, or made, or something or other like that, an old Manuscript entitl'd a *State Catechise*—In which there were a great many unhappy Questions, which have such a strange Relation to what has sometimes happened since, that it looks almost like Prophecy, and I cannot think it improper now and then to give you a Touch about it in these Papers: I hope, no body will take Exception at the bare Relation of things, and as to my own Remarks I'll take care to leave

them no Room for it; some of the Questions are unlucky enough, but as for the Answers they are——&c.

The first Question, our Manuscript offers to the World, was—

*Q.* Why do People, who make Speeches in P——t, print them when they have done?

*A.* 'Tis very seldom that they do, the wisest of them seldom do, and the modestest never.

*Q.* Why was the new Speech call'd—the Speech of a noble Peer, printed?

*A.* The noble Speaker answer'd various Ends in it. 1. He pleas'd his Vanity in puriuing his own Popularity, not having Eyes to see that most Men took him to be mad. 2. His Revenge, in that he thought he touch'd his adverse Friends to the Quick, by

by exposing even the King himself to the Reproach of the People. 3. He pleased the People by making a publick Appeal to them, thereby degrading his own Dignity, and the illustrious Body of Peers he was a Member of.

Q. But why did the noble Peer speak Nonsense ?

A. Not because he knew no better.

Q. But why did he print that Nonsense too ?

A. Because he thought the People easie enough to be impos'd upon, and to be jingled into any thing.

Q. But what has the noble Peer said ?

A. Nothing at all.

Q. But what did the noble Peer think he said ?

A. Nothing to the Purpose.

Q. But why did the noble Peer say it then ?

A. Because he has been used to do so.

Q. But what did the noble Peer mean ?

A. Nothing.

Q. And why did he mean nothing ?

A. Because he used to mean nothing.

Q. But what made the noble Peer so angry with the King's Whores ?

A. That's a Mistake, he was not angry with them at all.

Q. But why did he speak of having them all sacrific'd ?

A. Because he had a Mind they should not be sacrific'd.

Q. Why did he speak to have them turn'd out ?

A. Because he was in the Plot to have them kept in.

Q. How can this be ?

A. Why he spoke so ridiculously about their turning out, that nothing could be a more effectual Argument to their Establishment where they were.

And so much for an old Speech of a noble Peer, until I draw some Morals from the Story; yet I shall not make any Applications; let every Mans Fancy guide him as he pleases. The Speech I mention was made against Whores, evil Councillors, Ministry, and I know not who; *the first* were coupled with *the last*, to help to cry them out; *the last*

were coupled with *the first*, to help to keep them in: — And every Man said, he had link'd the Innocent with the Guilty, to blacken These, and preserve Those — And this effectually answer'd what the Author expected, viz. That it would be all very insignificant.

From all this, if I may be allow'd to draw some Inferences, they would be such as these.

1. 'Tis no new thing for great Men to make Speeches.

2. 'Tis no new thing for great Men to make Speeches, and then print them.

3. 'Tis no new thing for great Men to make Speeches, and print them when they are *very insignificant*, or in plain *English*, when they are *nothing to the Purpose*.

4. When great Men make Speeches, and print them when they are *nothing to the Purpose*, the common Peoples Business is to laugh at them, and wise Mens to take no Notice of them.

5. When great Men talk and print, and no Body minds them, they grow wiser at last, and hold their Tongues — *But this by the by*.

I return to my State Catechise, which examining the noble Peers Speech, made so many Years ago, goes on thus.

Q. What Country does *that noble Peer* speak of, when he is lamenting her Condition ?

A. His own Country.

Q. Why does he speak so pitifully of her, as if *she were RUIN'D, DESPERATE, and MISERABLE* ?

A. By Way of Anticipation, all for her Good.

Q. Why does he do it so publickly ?

A. All for her Service too, only that her Enemies may insult her as such, and fill their Gazettes and Mercuries with the miserable Condition of our Country, prov'd out of our own Mouths, to encourage their People to a War with us, that they may be destroy'd.

Q. How is this for our Good ?

A. Many Ways. 1. As it serves to humble and mortifie us, and not a little do scourage and reduce us, that so we may be fitter to bear our Destruction Spiritually. And 2.

As it may make our Enemies fool-hardy, and delude them with Thoughts of our Weakness; till they run headlong into our Hands, or HOUSES, one of the two, take it which way you will.

Q. What is the Benefit of making our Condition seem worse than it is?

A. O Abundance! Particularly that it brings it to be really worse than it seems.

Q. What is the Advantage of loading our Miscarriages upon the Heads of them, who have no hand in them?

A. More effectually skreening those that have.

Q. Why are People in great Places always call'd R—s?

A. Because there are always SOME out of those Places.

Q. What is the End of railing at Men in great Places?

A. To get into them our selves.

Q. What stops the Mouth of a Malecontent L—?

A. Making him the same R—— he rails at, viz. Giving him the Place he rails for.

From this Part of the Catechise, I cannot but make a few wholsome Inferences also, according to the Method I took before.

1. We are not in so bad a Condition, but we were worse formerly.

2. Let our Condition be never so bad, to make it appear worse than it is, shews more Passion than Discretion.

3. To be always complaining, and to be really reforming, proceed from two different Tempers, and aim at quite different Ends.

But my State Catechise comes upon me again.

Q. Who made this Speech, and when was it made?

A. Vide the Title, *The Speech of a Noble Peer, Anno 1679.*

Q. That is to say, who, it was reported, made it; but that does not answer the Question?

A. Whoever made it, he spoke it.

Q. Who is it probable made it?

A. Some that had less Wit, than he that spoke it.

Q. Is there less Sense in the making, or in the speaking it?

A. Little enough in either, but least of all in Printing it.

Q. Why may not a Noble Peer turn noble Pamphleteer, if he pleases?

A. Because it is impossible; the Nobility will not descend to the Pamphleteer, because from that Moment he commences Mechanick.

Q. What do you call a Mechanick in this Case?

A. 'Tis an Engine screw'd up by some Hand out of Sight, which works and moves as it were of it self, but really is supinely and passively obedient to the Engineer that screws it up; who frequently sets it wrong, on purpose to delude the ignorant, abused People.

Q. But is there not such a thing as a Party Engine, and is it not manag'd much the same way?

A. No doubt of it—— Your Experience may teach you that every Day.

Q. Does any Man speak in Publick, but he is that Engine to some Party or other?

A. Yes, yes, sometimes; but I do not say it is often.

Q. But does any Man print his Speeches, that is not a Tool to a Party?

A. Indeed, I dare not lay there are any such.

Q. Prithee, speak English, and answer my Question?

A. I must not speak English, I ought not to speak English; there have been noble Peers in former Ages that spake, and did not speak English, and that printed, and did not print English, and when they did, acknowledged it was nothing to the Purpose; and therefore I won't speak English, nor Truth, nor Sense, but will speak, *as that I will*, just as I think fit, for why should I set up to do more than my Better?

I confess, Gentlemen, these things were done a long time ago, and the Jett will be lost to a great many People, because to every Story there hangs a Tale, as we say, and Men ought to know the History of things, in order to understand the rest—For really, good People, there is not Room in this Paper for Explications; however, many People have that old Speech of a Noble Peer in